



Meet the Buyer South 2023

www.sdpscotland.co.uk

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Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer South 2023

378

Total Registered Suppliers

167

Attendees on the day

98

Attendees from unique Scottish SME businesses



“Well organised - much better than I had anticipated. The calibre of exhibitors and guest speakers was exceptional.”

100%

of respondents said that they were **highly likely** to or **would definitely recommend SDP** to other businesses.

90%

of respondents said that this event has **encouraged them to bid** for more public sector contracts.

97%

said the event **increased their awareness of opportunities** in the supply chain

12

Exhibition Stands on the day, including Scottish Government, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, Balfour Beatty, BAM, and Business Gateway

100%

of buyers said they would **recommend Meet the Buyer South** to other businesses

100%

of buyers felt Meet the Buyer South **helped their supply chain be more open and transparent**

100%

of buyers felt Meet the Buyer South **helped to make public sector contracts more accessible** to SMEs.

Overview

The Supplier Development Programme has published an online report on the Meet the Buyer South 2023 event that took place on 3 October 2023 at The Buccleuch Centre, Langholm. Alongside the Supplier Development Programme, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and South of Scotland Enterprise were official partners of this event.

This free event gave suppliers in the South of Scotland unprecedented access to buyers and decision makers from across the Public and Private sector, helping suppliers raise their profile as a business, and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

Supplier Registration and Attendance

In total, 378 suppliers had pre-registered interest on the SDP website for Meet the Buyer South 2023. There were 167 actual attendees on the day. Of those, 124 attendees were from 98 Scottish SME unique businesses. 36 of those SMEs in attendance were from businesses based in Dumfries and Galloway Council area and 6 in the Scottish Borders Council area.



Buyer Exhibitions

Exhibitors at Meet the Buyer South 2023 included headline partners: Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and South of Scotland Enterprise.

In total there were 12 exhibition stands, which included Scottish Government and Public Contracts Scotland, business support organisations, and a number of supply chain contractors, including: Balfour Beatty, Hub South East Scotland, and BAM.

Formal Agenda

Gillian Cameron, Programme Manager of the Supplier Development Programme delivered a welcome address to open the event.

Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance, was unable to attend on the day due to parliamentary business, but he provided a pre-recorded Ministerial Address.

Other presentations on the day include:

- 10:45 Keynote from Headline Partners delivered by Councillor Scott Hamilton, Councillor Ivor Hyslop and Jane Morrison-Ross, CEO of South of Scotland Enterprise
- 11:00 Q&A session with Nikki Archer, Scottish Government Deputy Director, Head of Procurement & Commercial Policy & Strategy
- 11:30 Dumfries and Galloway Council: Roads Contractor Engagement Session with Mark Wells, Project Director at Amey Consulting Scotland



Supplier Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all that attended Meet the Buyer South 2023. The survey was live from 6 October 2023 to 30 October 2023. 31 responses were received. 25 of these responses came from SMEs, Social Enterprises, and third sector organisations.

The post-event survey highlighted that 100% of respondents said that they would recommend SDP to other businesses.

The survey also highlighted that:

- 90% of respondents said that this event has encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts.
- 97% of respondents said that this event had increased their awareness of opportunities for their businesses in the supply chain.
- 81% of suppliers felt more confident about bidding for public sector contracts after attending Meet the Buyer South 2023.

- 97% of suppliers believe they made contacts at Meet the Buyer South 2023 that may have the potential to benefit their business in the next year, either through bidding for future contracts or being invited to Quick Quote.
- 87% of respondents feel that Meet the Buyer South was important in helping SMEs, charities and third sector organisations learn more about upcoming contracts and understand the tendering process.

When considering the Scottish Government’s commitment to becoming a Net Zero society by 2045:

- 84% of respondents were aware of the Scottish Government’s commitment to achieving a Net Zero society.
- 65% of respondents said they have an existing policy to support a reduction in its carbon footprint.

Some comments from suppliers included:

- “I have not attended one of these Meet the Buyer events before, but I found it interesting. The exhibitors very engaged and helpful. The event was well worth the drive down to Langholm. Thanks.”
- “Well organised - much better than I had anticipated. The calibre of exhibitors and guest speakers was exceptional.”
- “Overall, a good event but the venue was too cramped.”
- “I felt that the day was a success. However, the main issue I had was that the conference room was too small. I tried to attend several talks, but it was full. When I did manage to get a space, it was standing room at the door only, which made it difficult to hear the speakers. Other than that, it was a great day and a good way to make new connections.”
- “I thoroughly enjoyed this event; it was friendly and insightful. My only criticism is that not everyone representing the companies was a buyer.”
- “The venue was sparsely attended by exhibitors.”



Exhibitor Feedback Survey

An online survey was distributed to all that exhibited at Meet the Buyer South 2023. 4 responses to this survey were received between 12 October 2023 and 19 October 2023.

The post event survey highlighted:

- 100% of buyers rated Meet the Buyer South as 'Good' or 'Excellent'.
- 100% of buyers felt Meet the Buyer South helped to make public sector contracts more accessible to SMEs.
- 100% of buyers said they would participate in next year's Meet the Buyer South.
- 100% of buyers said they would recommend this event to other organisations.
- 100% of buyers felt Meet the Buyer South helped their supply chain be more open and transparent.

Some comments from buyers included:

- "Good attendance and engagement from suppliers. The event was well organised and had a good range of other buyers present."
- "I felt the event was well attended. There were a variety of businesses in attendance that were keen to engage."
- "The venue hall was perhaps a little small. There was not much room between stands, and it was difficult to hear what was being said."
- "The venue was not the most convenient (location wise) or perhaps big enough. The event would have benefitted from an earlier finish. There should have been more topics discussed at presentations (not just roads). Although it was a very positive day, the event probably didn't have as much scope as the 2022 event in Selkirk."

All feedback from suppliers and buyers is valuable and will be applied to future events organised by the Supplier Development Programme.

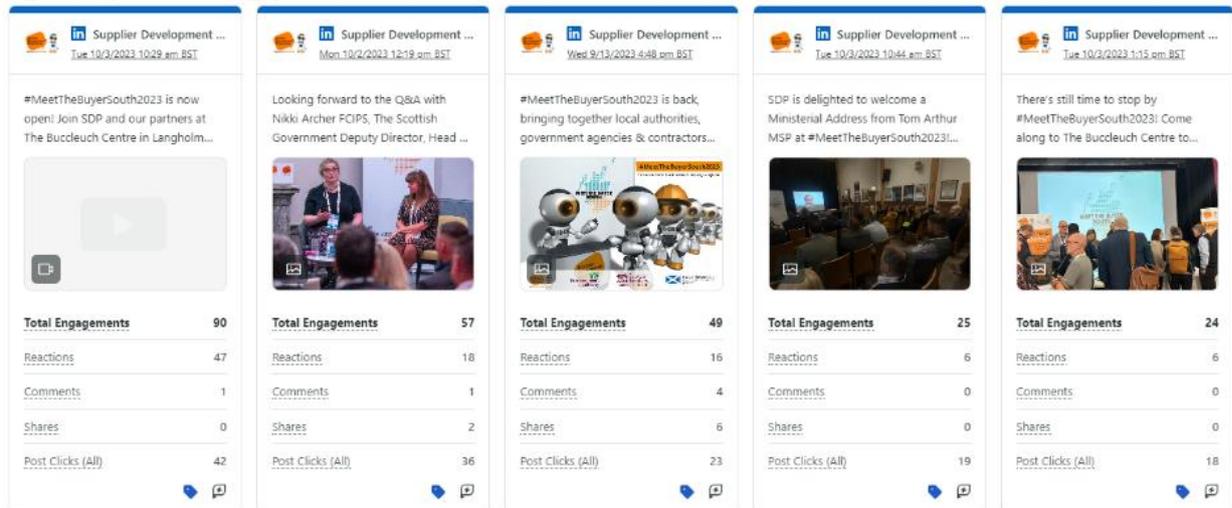


Promotion through the Supplier Development Programme

Social Media Analytics

Prior to the event, SDP published 86 posts, across Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, promoting Meet the Buyer South. The campaign ran from 21 July 2023 to 3 October 2023. Collectively, the posts earned 12,931 impressions (the number of times users saw a post) and 615 engagements (the number of times users interacted with posts). In total, there were 253 clicks on the links embedded in these posts.

Highest performing posts include:



Newsletters/Mailings

The Meet the Buyer South event was announced in SDP's July 2023 monthly newsletter, and featured in all subsequent Newsletters before the event, on 3 October.

- July 2023 Newsletter received 127 clicks.
- August 2023 Newsletter received 85 clicks.
- September 2023 Newsletter received 29 clicks.

SDP also utilised a targeted approach to email marketing, sending out mailings to all suppliers based in the South of Scotland. The mailing received 89 clicks.

Post Event

Both delegate and exhibitor feedback has been reviewed and individual questions addressed. All feedback will be taken on board and will be applied to future events organised by the Supplier Development Programme.

Contact

More information on the Supplier Development Programme can be found at www.sdpscotland.co.uk and on social media via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).